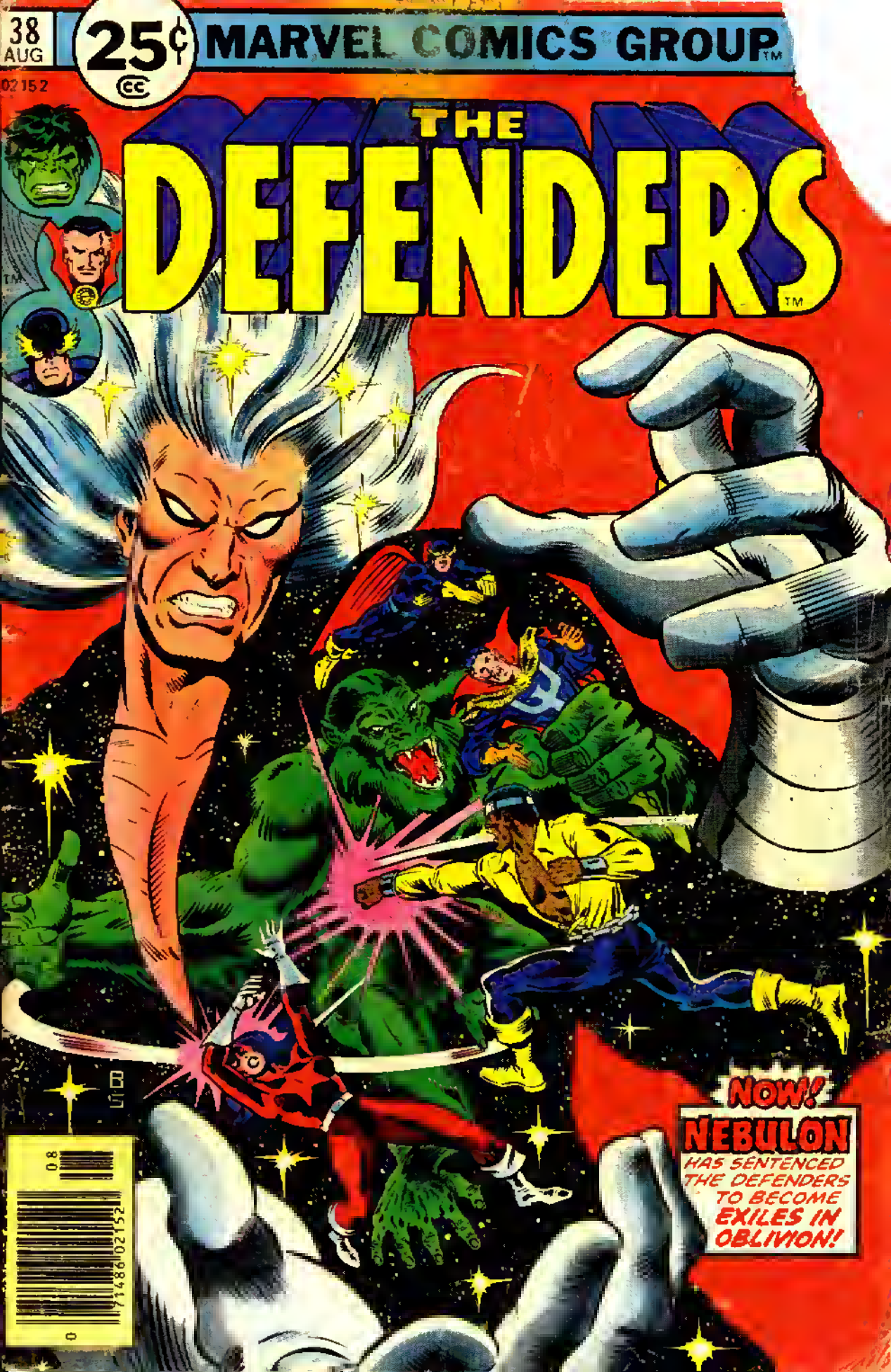
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THE
DEFENDERS™
NOW!
NEBULON
HAS SENTENCED
THE DEFENDERS
TO BECOME
EXILES IN
OBLIVION!

The mysterious **DR. STRANGE!** The vibrant **VALKYRIE!** The high-flying **NIGHTHAWK!** The incredible **HULK!** Evil-doers **TREMBLE** at the names—for these four form the crux of the greatest **NON-TEAM** in history, heroes called together only when the need arises—to battle **MENACES** that threaten the security—or the very **LIFE**—of the planet **EARTH!**

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER ✶ SAL BUSCEMA & KLAUS JANSON ARTISTS ✶ I. WATANABE LETTERER ✶ DON WARFIELD COLORIST ✶ MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR

EXILE TO OBLIVION!

WHEN WE LAST SAW DR. STRANGE, POWER MAN, AND THE RED GUARDIAN, THEY WERE LYING UNCONSCIOUS ON THE FLOOR OF NEW YORK'S ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL. **OBVIOUSLY, THINGS HAVE CHANGED!**

HEAR ME, DR. STRANGE!

YOU HAVE DISRUPTED MY PLANS FOR THE LAST TIME!

MY DIMENSION-SPANNING POWERS HAVE DEPOSITED YOU IN AN ENVIRONMENT SO **HOSTILE** TO LIFE--YOU'LL BE TOO OCCUPIED WITH **SURVIVAL** EVEN TO ATTEMPT **ESCAPE!**

AW, COME OFF IT, MAN! AIN'T NO PLACE MORE HOSTILE THAN **FORTY-SECOND STREET!**

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WHO IS THIS TURKEY, ANYWAY, DOC? WHAT'S HIS BEEF WITH YOU?
HE IS CALLED NEBULON, THE CELESTIAL MAN, MR. CAGE--AND THE DEFENDERS HAVE INCURRED HIS WRATH--
--BY FRUSTRATING HIS ATTEMPTS TO CONQUER THE EARTH!
IT PLEASES YOU, DOESN'T IT, STRANGE--TO PAINT SO NOBLE A PORTRAIT OF YOURSELF? BUT YOU AND I ARE BOTH AWARE THAT IT IS A MEGALOMANIACAL LIE, THAT MY MISSION TO YOUR EARTH...
...IS NOT CONQUEST, BUT SALVATION!
HE SPLIT!
WHAT WAS THAT "SALVATION" RAP HE WAS LAYIN' DOWN?
A LONG STORY, MR. CAGE ...ONE I SHALL RELATE TO YOU IN FULL. AFTER I'VE CAST THE SPELL WHICH WILL TAKE US HOME.
THE SORCERER SUPREME SPEAKS SOME ESOTERIC INCANTATION. MYSTICAL ENERGIES CRACKLE IN THE AIR BETWEEN HIS HANDS...
AND, A MOMENT LATER...
...EVERY MUSCLE IN HIS BODY SPASMS AT ONCE...
HE IS THROWN SCREAMING TO THE GROUND.
MAGICAL FORCES ...ATTRACTED LIGHTNING... FROM THE ATMOSPHERE...!
ENCHANTMENTS ...USELESS... ELECTRIC STORM... CONSTANT ON THIS WORLD!
SWEET CHRISTMAS, MAN--YOU TRYIN' T' OUTDO BEN FRANKLIN, OR WHAT?!
HERE, LEMME HELP YA! AW, CRIPES--RAIN!! YOU GET YOUR CHOICE HERE--YA CAN BURN OR DROWN!
YOU CONCEDE, THEN, MR. CAGE, THAT OUR LOCALE MAY BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOUR TIMES SQUARE!
ONLY 'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW THE RULES YET, SISTER.

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF A STRING OF POWER MAN'S MOST UNPRINTABLE EXCLAMATIONS, IT COMES LUMBERING OUT OF THE SHADOWS--THE FROTHING, WHITE-FURRED MONSTROSITY WHICH DWELLS IN THIS GROTTO.
YOU TWO GOT ANY PRETTY PHILOSOPHIES THAT'LL SNUFF THAT THING?!
THE MAGE MAKES NO REPLY.
NOR DOES HE ALLOW THE CONSTERNATION HE FEELS TO EXHIBIT ITSELF UPON HIS FEATURES. CONTROL IS OF THE ESSENCE.
WITH FORCED CALM, HE RECITES A SPELL--EVEN AS JACK NORRISS RELATES THE TALE OF THE TRIO'S ABDUCTION TO KYLE RICHMOND BACK ON EARTH.
THEY GAVE ME A WHIFF OF KNOCKOUT GAS, TOO.
BUT I GUESS I WASN'T IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO RATE BEING CARTED OFF!
THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE EEL AND THE PORCUPINE--THE KIDNAPPERS--BUT THEY MENTIONED CELESTIAL MIND CONTROL, AND--
CELESTIAL WHAT--?
OBOY. I FORGOT--YOUR BRAIN WAS STILL IN A DISH WHEN--
KYLE--WAIT! YOU'RE NOT WELL ENOUGH YET TO BLOW THE HOSPITAL! JUST TELL ME WHAT TO DO, AND--
NO! I'M PART OF A TEAM, NORRISS! AND RIGHT NOW--WITH YOUR WIFE STILL IN
I'M THE ONLY MEMBER OF THAT TEAM WHO CAN COME TO THE RESCUE! LET'S MOVE!

IT SHOULD BE DULY NOTED THAT MRS. NORRISS' ABSENCE IS HARDLY VOLUNTARY.
SLURP
NO, VALKYRIE, TOO IS PRESENTLY A PRISONER---
--A CAPTIVE OF THAT SUPER-POWERED ENTITY KNOWN AS THE STATE.
C'MON-- WE'RE CELLMATES! YOU CAN SHARE YOUR SECRETS WITH ME! I'M DYING TO KNOW IF THE GRAPEVINE BUZZ IS TRUE!
"BUZZ?"
PRISON CAFETERIA
THEY SAY YOU WERE HAULED IN FOR WRECKING A RESTAURANT WITH YOUR SWORD!
I MEAN-- I'VE SEEN HOW STRONG YOU ARE. I CAN ALMOST BELIEVE
ARE WE PERMITTED TO CONVERSE AT MEALS, SHIRLEY?
SILENCE
OH, HECK, YEAH! THOSE "SILENCE" SIGNS ARE ANTIQUES! THEY DON'T ENFORCE 'EM.
C'MON, LAY THE WHOLE STORY ON ME!
PALSY-WALSY WITH BLONDIE, AIN'T SHE?
SOMEBODY OUGHTTA 'ER FRIENDS ARE, DON'TCHA THINK?
KINDA KEEPIN' YOUR DISTANCE TODAY, HUH, KID? EATIN' 'WAY DOWN HERE. I MEAN-- INSTEAD O' WITH YOUR OLD CHUMS.
WE DO SOMETHIN' TO OFFEND YOU? OR YOU JUST PREFER OTHER COMPANY? OR WHAT?
N-NO... REALLY... I...
ENOUGH! I FIND THIS CRUDE TACTIC OF INTIMIDATION BOTH OFFENSIVE AND BORING. I SHALL ASK YOU POLITELY AND ONLY ONCE-- TO GO AWAY.
YOUR ASSUMPTION WAS CORRECT. YOUR COMPANY IS UNWANTED.
OH, I SEE! WELL, I SURE! IN THAT CASE I'LL JUST MOSEY ALONG--
SOON AS I PUT OUT MY SMOKE, SWEET-CHEEKS.
ZZT

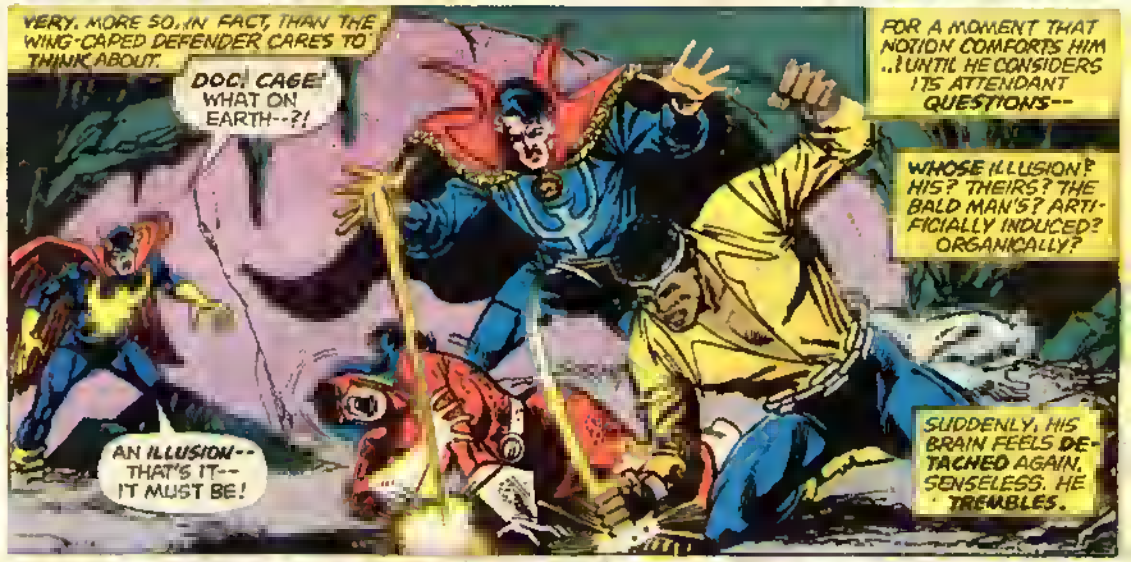
SHUCKS; IT'S ONE O' MY RULES TO LIVE BY-- NEVER STAY WHERE YOU'RE NOT--
ONE MOMENT.
YOU SEEM TO HAVE MISLAID SOMETHING IN MY STEW. I SHOULD THINK YOU'D WISH TO RETRIEVE IT.
MMM...AN' IF I REFUSE?
THE ANSWER COMES GENTLY-- WITH ALMOST LOVING RESTRAINT-- FOR VAL IS MAGICALLY PROHIBITED FROM EXERCISING HER POWER ON OTHER WOMEN.
I DO HOPE I HAVEN'T HURT YOU.
YOU KIDDIN'?
YOU SCALDED ME! YOU PRACTICALLY BOILED MY FACE OFF WITH STEAMIN' HOT STEW!!
YOU LIE! IT WAS TEPID AT BEST.
TELL IT TO THE SCREWS, HONEY.
AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
SHE ATTACKED ME, THAT'S WHAT.' KEEP 'ER BACK, OR I'LL--
HER CHARGE IS TOTALLY UNTRUE. ASK SHIRLEY--SHE WITNESSED THE ENTIRE INCIDENT.
WELL, KID,-- HOW 'BOUT IT? WHO'S LEVELIN' AND WHO'S LYIN'? SPEAK UP!
TELL THEM, SHIRLEY. YOU'VE NOTHING TO FEAR.
YEAH, SHUR-LEE-- SPIT IT OUT!
I... DIDN'T SEE...
AW, NOW AIN'T THAT TOO BAD! SHE MUST'A NOT BEEN WATCHIN'!
GUESS THAT MEANS YOU MISS DIN-DIN TONIGHT, SWEET CHEEKS. CATCH YA LATER!
I SPOTTED THIS ONE AS A TROUBLE-MAKER-- DIDN'T I WARN YOU?
YEAH, YEAH...

GET WITH IT, WILLYA, DOC?! EVEN A GUY WITH STEEL-HARD SKIN CAN'T TAKE THIS KINDA BEATIN' FOREVER!
I--I'M TRYING, MR. CAGE--BUT MY SPELLS--SEEM TO HAVE LOST THEIR POTENCY--AGAIN!*
I SHALL TRY ONCE MORE TO CREATE A DISTRACTION--
*AS IN ISH #36 & 37. --MARV.
--THOUGH I FEAR MY MERELY HUMAN STRENGTH WILL ACCOMPLISH LITTLE..
THUK!
INDEED, HE SEEMS NOT EVEN TO NOTICE THE BLOWS!
UNNNGH!
OH, HE NOTICED 'EM, ALL RIGHT!
WHAP!
OWWW!
KR AK
--JUST ENOUGH T' GET 'IM REALLY MAD!
'COURSE, THAT MIGHT NOT BE ALL BAD, DIG? 'CUZ NOW I'M PRETTY HASSLED MYSELF--
--AN' MEAN ENOUGH TA TAKE UP A WEAPON!

AN' WHEN THIS PARTICULAR DUDE GETS T' FEELIN' THAT NASTY--
--AIN'T NOTHIN'--BUT NOTHIN'--STANDS IN HIS WAY!
FWOMP
GOT THAT?
PRAISE THE VISHANTI! I WOULD'VE THOUGHT ONLY THE HULK CAPABLE OF SUCH A FEAT!
THAT YOU ACCOMPLISHED IT WITHOUT KILLING THE BEAST IS ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE!
HATE T' DISILLUSION YA, DOC--BUT I WANTED TO. I SURELY DID!
I SUPPOSE YOU CAN HARDLY BE BLAMED--AND YET, WE ARE THE INTRUDERS HERE, NOT HIM.
AND THE PAIN HE SUFFERED WOULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED ENTIRELY IF MY SORCERY HAD--!
IT'S AS IF SOME PART OF MY BRAIN WERE UNABLE TO--
=UUUH= MY KNEE--WHAT--?
SHE ASSUMES AT FIRST SHE'S SIMPLY KNEELED ON SOME JAGGED BIT OF ROCK, SOME BED OF LOOSE GRAVEL. BUT WHEN SHE GLANCES DOWNWARD, HER ANNOYANCE TURNS TO HORROR.
NO...!
THEY'RE ALIVE!! THOUSANDS OF THEM--CRAWLING OUT OF THE CRACKS IN THE ROCK!!
MOONS OF MUNNOPOR--SHE'LL BE EATEN ALIVE!
CAGE--OVER HERE! HELP ME!

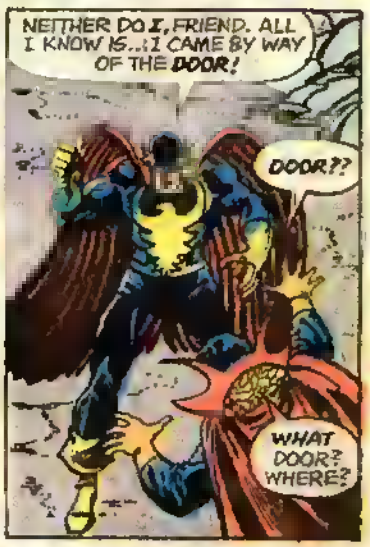
MIDTOWN MANHATTAN: FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WHAT SEEMS TO HIM AN ETERNITY, KYLE RICHMOND DONS THE DRAMATIC GARB OF NIGHTHAWK AND TAKES TO THE SKY, HIS MIND REELING AT THE TALE TOLD HIM BY JACK NORRISS.
HE'S NOT QUITE SURE WHETHER TO BELIEVE IT, ACTUALLY -- THE EEL, THE PORCUPINE, IN LEAGUE WITH NEBULON.
CELESTIAL MIND CONTROL, NEBULON'S STATED INTENTION TO SAVE MANKIND... IT'S TOO BIZARRE!
AND YET, THE ADDRESS NORRISS GAVE HIM DOES HOUSE SOMETHING CALLED THE "CMC FOUNDATION."
AND, SURE ENOUGH, ON ENTERING IN HIS OVEREAGER FASHION, HE DOES FIND A PARLORFUL OF BOZO MASKS...!
IT'S UTTERLY INSANE -- BUT IT MUST BE TRUE!
INTERESTING -- THAT I CAN STILL MANAGE SURPRISE AT THIS SORT OF THING.
HE IS AN ENEMY OF THE MASTER! SEIZE HIM!!
I CAN ADMIRE YOUR DEDICATION, FELLAS 'N' GALS --

--BUT I GOTTA BE HONEST. IT'S GONNA NET YOU EXACTLY ZIP!
MY SOURCES SAY YOU CLOWNS PUT THE SNATCH ON SOME FOLKS WHO'RE NEAR AND DEAR TO MY HEART. AND, GANG--
--THAT'S A NO-NO!
VERY IMPRESSIVE, NIGHTHAWK--AND TOTALLY UNNECESSARY. WE'RE ALL CIVILIZED HUMAN BEINGS HERE, YOU KNOW.
IF IT'S INFORMATION YOU REQUIRE, THE BEST WAY TO OBTAIN IT IS TO ASK.
I TAKE IT YOU'RE THE KEEPER OF THIS ASYLUM?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT. MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE?
UH-HUH. YEAH. YOU MAY.
WHERE ARE THE DEFENDERS??
IS THAT WHAT ALL THIS FUSS IS ABOUT?! TCH, TCH! THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND THAT DOOR.
YOU DON'T TRUST ME, DO YOU?
GO ON, SEE FOR YOURSELF.
I WILL!
AND IF THIS IS ANY KIND OF TRICK OR TRAP, I'LL ALSO--
HOLY--
SLAM!
I'LL BE GOING NOW, NIGHTHAWK. I'VE A LECTURE DATE TO KEEP. BUT I PRESUME YOU'RE SATISFIED...
I'VE BEEN VERY HONEST WITH YOU.


VERY. MORE SO, IN FACT, THAN THE WING-CAPED DEFENDER CARES TO THINK ABOUT.
DOC! CAGE! WHAT ON EARTH--?!
FOR A MOMENT THAT NOTION COMFORTS HIM ..! UNTIL HE CONSIDERS ITS ATTENDANT QUESTIONS--
WHOSE ILLUSION? HIS? THEIRS? THE BALD MAN'S? ARTIFICIALLY INDUCED? ORGANICALLY?
AN ILLUSION-- THAT'S IT-- IT MUST BE!
SUDDENLY, HIS BRAIN FEELS DETACHED AGAIN, SENSELESS. HE TREMBLES.

SUDDENLY, IT BECOMES IMPERATIVE TO ESTABLISH THE PHYSICAL REALITY OF THE MACABRE TABLEAU. IF HE CANNOT, HE MUST CONCLUDE HE IS MAD. AND EVEN THIS IS PREFERABLE...!
DOC! DOC!!
SNAP OUT OF IT, MAN! YOU'VE GOT TO--PLEASE-- I--

I need to know I'm okay...
KYLE... KYLE... KYLE?!
EYES OF OSHTUR! WHERE--HOW DID YOU--I DO NOT--!


NEITHER DO I, FRIEND. ALL I KNOW IS..: I CAME BY WAY OF THE DOOR!
DOOR??
WHAT DOOR? WHERE?

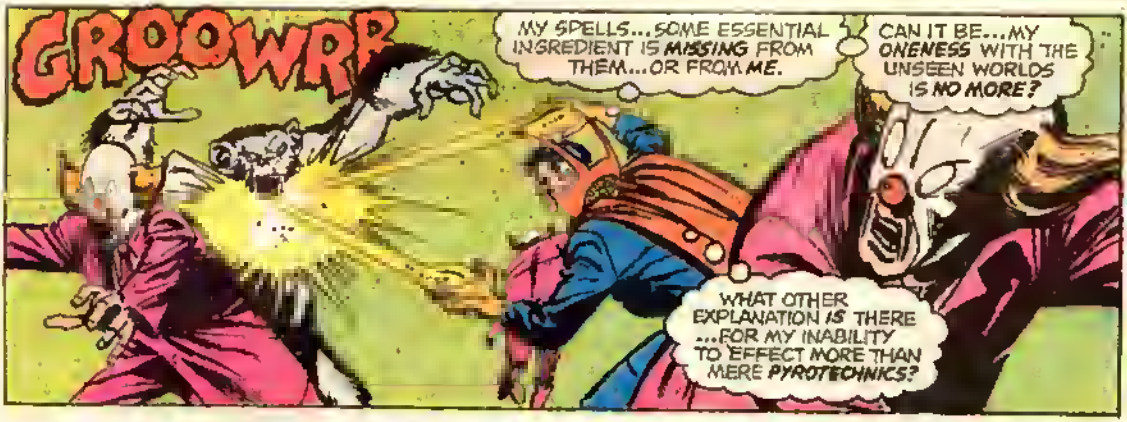
TWO WORDS I NEVER, EVER FIGURED I'D BE SAYING TO YOU, DOC-- CALM DOWN.
WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE? I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU SO FLAT-OUT FRANTIC!
IS THIS THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE DOOR YOU SPOKE OF?
RIGHT. BUT, DOC--
LATER, MY FRIEND.

SUFFICE IT TO SAY MY COMPOSURE HAS RETURNED.
AND WITH IT, MY EFFECTIVENESS-- FOR NOW, AT LEAST.

ONE QUICK FLICK OF THE MYSTIC'S WRIST LATER...
DEMONS OF DENAK! THE DOOR IS A DIMENSIONAL PORTAL!
BUT BEFORE THE AWED ADEPT CAN STEP BACK INTO OUR WORLD...
PULL IT SHUT! AND HOLD IT THAT WAY!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY DIDN'T THE MASTER LOCK--?
YOURS IS NOT TO QUESTION, BUT TO ACT--BOZO!
HURRY UPSTAIRS! ROUSE THE HELP!
THE REST OF YOU MAINTAIN YOUR PULL ON THAT DOOR! THE MAGICIAN MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO ESCAPE!
PHYSICAL FORCE IS HARDLY MY BAILIWICK, BUT WITH MY SPELLS BEHAVING SO ERRATICALLY...
NO NEED FOR APOLOGIES, DOC. WE'RE READY WHEN YOU ARE.
RIGHT ON, MAN. YOUR SHOULDER'S GOOD AS THE NEXT CAT'S.
NO FURTHER VERBIAGE IS NECESSARY. TOGETHER, THEY BEGIN THEIR CHARGE.
TOGETHER, THEY ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVE.
KRAK
THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH!!

FOR ALL THE GOOD IT WILL DO THEM!
YOU SEE, DR. STRANGE, NOT EVERY DISCIPLE OF CELESTIAL MIND CONTROL IS MERELY HUMAN.
SOME--LIKE THE EEL, AND MYSELF, THE PORCUPINE--ARE MORE THAN YOUR EQUALS IN POWER AS WELL AS ENLIGHTENMENT.
SOUNDS T'ME LIKE THAT WALKIN' HAYSTACK WANTS A RUMBLE.
BACK IN A SEC, R.G.
THAT'S ALL IT'LL TAKE TO SETTLE THE SCORE!
PAIN SUBSIDING... INSECTS... DROPPING FROM MY BODY...
...DEAD! THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE DIMENSIONAL PORTAL MUST'VE... OVER-TAXED THE LITTLE DEARS!
YOU NEEDN'T CONCERN YOURSELF WITH ME, MR. CAGE.
I'VE JUST BECOME ANOTHER WORRY FOR OUR FOES!
:HEH: LISTEN TO THEM, EEL--THEIR SUPREME ARROGANCE, THEIR SELF-PROCLAIMED HEROISM.
GET THIS STRAIGHT, CHUMS--WE'RE NOT THE SLOBS WE USED TA BE! OUR OLD BOZO-SELVES ARE KAPUT!
AND BESIDES... WE'RE NOT THE ONLY TROUBLE YOU GOT ON YOUR HANDS!
STEPHEN! THE DOORWAY! LOOK!

MEANWHILE, IN THE GRAND CANYON...
SORT OF A BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY, ISN'T IT, STU-- TWO TRAIL GUIDES TAKING THE CANYON MULEBACK?
BUT THIS TIME IT'S JUST YOU 'N' ME, SALLY. NO TOURISTS' "OOH'S" AND "AH'S".
WE'RE ALL ALONE-- TOGETHER.
OR SO IT SEEMS UNTIL THEY ROUND A BEND OF THE NARROW TRAIL...
...AND DISCOVER--
HOW!
WH-WHAT'S HE DOING HERE? LOOK HOW COARSE AND WEATHERED HIS SKIN IS! HE MUST BE A HUNDRED YEARS OLD!
I--DON'T THINK SO--I MEAN--
I THINK HIS AGE IS IRRELEVANT, HE'S DEAD!
THAT STYLE OF HEADDRESS WAS WORN ONLY BY THE CHIEFS OF THE EXTINCT WAPPIDI CRAFTI TRIBE!
SO YOU-- YOU'RE A VISION AREN'T YOU?
I AM ...WHAT I AM.
I KNEW IT! THIS IS A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE! I-- YOU'RE GONNA IMPART SOME ANCIENT PRIMITIVE WISDOM TO ME!
YOU'LL BE WISER FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, YES.
SPOING
Y-YOUR HEAD!!
I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND --WHAT'S THE MYSTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF-- WAIT!--YOU--
YOU'RE NOT AN INDIAN
"--YOU'RE AN ELF!"
AW, SHUCKS! BLEW MY COVER! GUESS THAT MEANS YOU WIN YOUR MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE!
'BYE, STU!
BLAM



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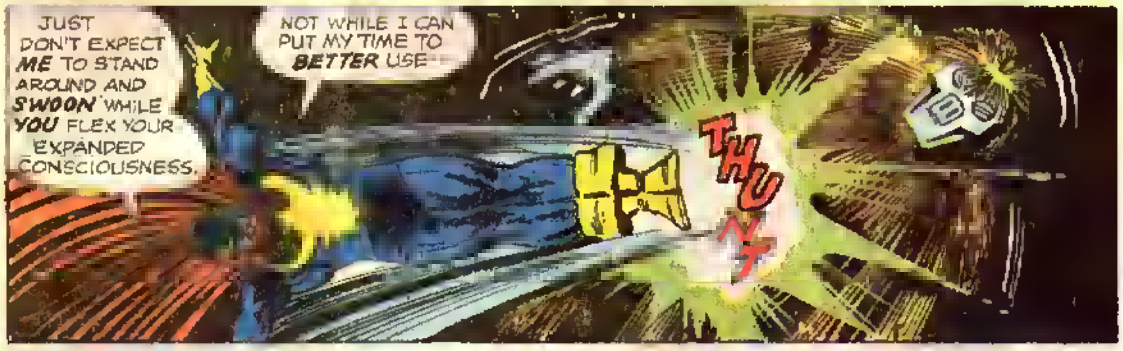
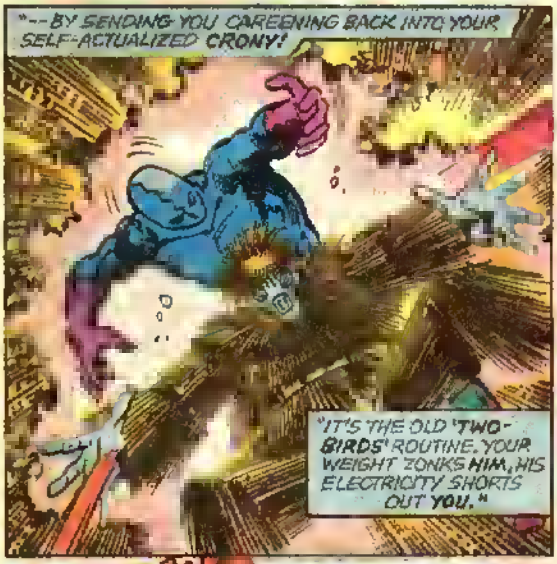
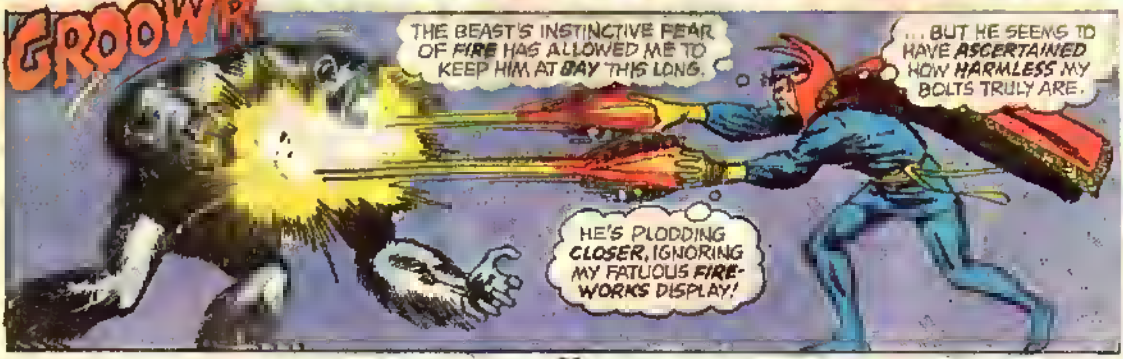
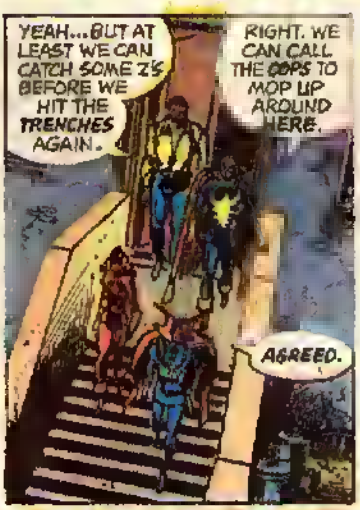
I'D HOPED YOUR GROUP WOULD PROVIDE MORE OF A CHALLENGE NIGHTHAWK—AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EEL AND I TO UTILIZE OUR NEWLY-ACQUIRED SELF-AWARENESS.
INSTEAD OF EXCERCISING YOUR NON-STOP MOUTH, YOU MEAN? GO AHEAD! UTILIZE! IT'D BE A RELIEF!


JUST DON'T EXPECT ME TO STAND AROUND AND SWOON WHILE YOU FLEX YOUR EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS.
NOT WHILE I CAN PUT MY TIME TO BETTER USE—
THUNT


"--BY SENDING YOU CAREENING BACK INTO YOUR SELF-ACTUALIZED CRONY!
"IT'S THE OLD 'TWO-BIRDS' ROUTINE. YOUR WEIGHT ZONKS HIM, HIS ELECTRICITY SHORTS OUT YOU."

BINGO, FEATHER-FACE! YOU'RE A HERO!
AND A CREDIT TO MY SURGICAL EXPERTISE. THE BRAIN I REPLACED IN YOUR SKULL FUNCTIONS MORE THAN ADEQUATELY, I'D SAY.
YEAH, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO THANK YOU FOR THAT!


GROOWR
THE BEAST'S INSTINCTIVE FEAR OF FIRE HAS ALLOWED ME TO KEEP HIM AT BAY THIS LONG.
... BUT HE SEEMS TO HAVE ASCERTAINED HOW HARMLESS MY BOLTS TRULY ARE.
HE'S PLODDING CLOSER, IGNORING MY FATUOUS FIREWORKS DISPLAY!



NEXT > RIOT IN A WOMEN'S PRISON! (OR: "B-MOVIES LIVE!!")